

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Winter 2013

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi.php

The Wapsi River Center is owned, managed and operated by the Scott County Conservation Board with programming and development assistance from the Clinton County Conservation Board.

Wapsi Center Happenings

by Dave Murcia, Wapsi River Center Director

Fall Field Trip Attendance

Approximately 2,385 students, teachers, parents and grandparents participated in 24 field trips here at the Wapsi River Center this fall. An *emphasis on supporting the Iowa Core* will enhance future programming for Iowa school programming.

If you are an educator and would like to schedule a winter or spring field trip, we recommend that you call well in advance, if possible. *To set up a field trip*, you may download a **Field Trip Planner** from our website: www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi_education.php and contact us at (563) 328-3286.



Ecology Day 2012

This year's theme was *Footsteps Into Iowa's Past* and included: *native skills* (rope making, cattail baskets and atlatls), *Iowa's Fossils* with University of Iowa's Geo-



Science presentation and *Prehistoric Indian Cultures in Iowa* by QC Archeological Society Vice-President Bernie Peeters. The day ended with a celestial celebration and the *Eastern Iowa Star Party*. Thanks to all who supported the annual event including the Friends of the Wapsi Center!

Center Improvements Continue

The pond restoration progress this year includes the installation of the waterside educational platform, composting pit toilet, bluebird boxes and most recently, 12 wood duck boxes. A new handicap parking space, in memory of longtime Friends' member Dottie Wala, was installed near the Eagle View



Eco Center and replacement walkways were completed. Not many masons would allow a critter or two to "walk" through their pristine concrete for the sake of environmental education. Also underway is the replacement of the garage roof.



Thank you to our skilled maintenance staff from **West Lake Park** and **Wapsi caretaker** for ensuring these projects are meeting our needs!

Eagle Scout Project



Jacob Walsh, Venturing Crew 325 Eagle Scout candidate, has completed his project at the Wapsi River Center in support of both wildlife as well



as the public. Jacob's project included planning, building and installing 12 wood duck nest boxes for the restored pond and wetland at the Wapsi Center. The direct benefit to wildlife offers nesting structures while indirectly offering the public the ability for wildlife viewing. Visit the Center to enjoy the hard work this Scout and his crew gave to benefit the Center.

New Scaly Educator at Wapsi

The staff at the Wapsi Center has acquired a new **western hognose snake**, *Heterodon nasicus*, and it will be offered as an education specimen for programming. The specimen was donated by a local rescuer and was previously used for education by local partners. This species is listed as endangered in the state of Iowa due to the decline of its preferred sand-loess prairie habitat. *Will you be the next to visit and see this elusive creature at an event or school program?*



Sponsor an Animal

A very important part of environmental education at the Wapsi River Center revolves around the **live animal**

displays. Each year, thousands of individuals come to learn about the wild animals that are found in the regions. Schools, classrooms, youth organizations, families and individuals are encouraged to sponsor an animal. Sponsorships also make great gifts!

Upon **sponsoring an animal**, you will receive a packet of information containing a fact sheet of your animal, photograph of the animal and recognition of sponsorship on the animal's enclosure. **Sponsorship levels include:** Raptor ~ \$50, Reptile ~ \$25 and Amphibian ~ \$15. If you are interested in sponsoring an animal, please contact us at (563) 328-3286 for further details.

Thank you, Lisa!

As the seasons pass, we all look for a path that takes us where we want to go. It is this thought; I believe will take our assistant naturalist and longest Wapsi staff member, Lisa, onto the next chapter in her life, as she walks up river to her next adventure.

Over the years, Lisa shared how to keep **'Toasty Toes'** and **kids green**. From **'plarn'** to **tiskets and taskets** she made baskets, created curriculum, displays and even taught **'Educators and Women in the Wild'**. From Lisa's tasty and crafty creations to all her **'green'** energy; her path will be hard to follow. Though her footprints will be seen throughout all the seasons at the Wapsi Center, just ask the **Lorax!**



Thank you, Lisa for your commitment and energy you have shown and reflected to our department, our center, our staff, our partners and the community over the past 18 years. **I wish you luck, health and joy on your next path.**

The W.R.E.N. is Green!

Please remember that you may now visit our website and sign up to get *The W.R.E.N.* in an effort to **protect, conserve, and preserve our vital resources**. Please contact us if you require a mailed version. Don't forget – we are also on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/scottcountyconservation.

The Plight of the Flight of Chief

by Lisa Gerwulf, Assistant Naturalist

Over the years, two articles have been reader favorites – *Hello & Goodbyes* and *Through the Eyes of a Naturalist*. This article is a combination of both. I had the opportunity to visit Wyalusing State Park near Bagley, Wisconsin the first part of October. What impressed me the most about this park was that the area was rich in natural, cultural, geological and historical features. A history few parks can boast.

Nestled on a high bluff at the junction of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers, I walked in the footsteps of Effigy Mound builders, famed explorers Marquette & Joliet, French & British fur traders, the first Badgers (lead miners who inhabited their “mines”), opportunistic pig farmers, lumberjacks, immigrants that once called the area of WSP home, and even the famous naturalist Aldo Leopold.

The natural or biological history of the area boasts diverse and extraordinary plant life due to the wide range of topography. Hundreds of species of trees (especially oak, beech and chestnut), shrubs, grasses, flowers and fungi can be found in an area that has had 100 years of hardwood forest succession. Forty-seven species of mammals, 27 species of reptiles, 15 species of amphibians and 284 species of birds consider Wyalusing’s 2,674 acres home. If the check lists dated back to the 1800s, the passenger pigeon would definitely have a prominent position.



Passenger pigeons were once the most abundant bird on earth, numbering in the billions. It’s been reported that a single flock of spring migrants could stretch for 300 miles and take 14 hours to pass overhead! Night roosts were in constant turmoil; as late arrivals were subjected to “resting” on the backs of earlier arrivals. James Dinsmore, in his book [A Country So Full of Game - The Story of Wildlife in Iowa](#) reported that the birds were sometimes packed so tightly that their combined weight was enough to break off branches 5-6” in diameter. Not a small feat for a bird weighing in at an average cup of coffee. In the late 1860s or early 1870s, W. J. McGee saw an estimated 600 million near Dubuque, Iowa in one day!

Passenger pigeons were hunted as a food source (for humans as well as livestock – pigs, in particular) and their numbers dwindled as a result of market hunting; especially during the 1870s and 1880s. The methods used to collect passenger pigeons were creative and rarely employed to use of a gun. Nest tipping, clubbing, netting, stoning and simply knocking them from the air with long sticks were a few cheap options. The methods might have been efficient, but they verged on the edge of unethical and unsportsmanlike; at least by today’s standards. But at the time, few could afford a more sportsmanlike method as the cost of ammunition was expensive.

Harvested birds weren’t cleaned, but rather packed whole into barrels and covered with ice for shipment. We cringe here at the Center anytime a shipment of frozen mice gets lost in transit. I

can’t imagine the waste associated with barrels upon barrels of birds delayed by steam locomotion. Farmers trapped them by the wagonloads in their wheat fields by employing complex netting systems. Some birds, as many as 1,500, were sold for 10¢ apiece and used as targets for trapshooting.

It’s believed that in 1900, the last remaining wild passenger pigeon was taken. By 1901, the only passenger pigeons alive were in zoos. The last passenger pigeon, Martha, died in the Cincinnati Zoo on September 1, 1914 at age 29.

At Wyalusing State Park, there is a brass plaque commemorating the “funeral of a species” as Aldo Leopold put it. Leopold was invited on May 11, 1947 by the WS Society for Ornithology to a ceremony commemorating the demise of the passenger pigeon. The memorial plaque reads in part, “This species became extinct through the avarice and thoughtlessness of man.” He was prompted to write an essay on the event which appeared in his famous book, [A Sand County Almanac](#). In the essay, he wrote that “tourists will read this inscription, but their thoughts will not take flight.” I was one of those tourists, and 65 years later joined my footprints to countless others that had indeed read the inscription and stood pondering at the bluff’s edge.



Dinsmore states that “human exploitation may have hastened their decline, but habitat loss alone may have been enough to cause the species’ extinction.” Leopold would argue that man has not realized their place as being “fellow-voyagers with other creatures” or have cultivated the “sense of kinship with fellow-creatures.” As a fellow naturalist, I believe we need to take not only Leopold’s but Chief Seattle’s advice. We need to continue to gain a better understanding of our role in the web of life, relinquish the idea that we are the machine, and accept the fact that we are merely a cog within.

It’s at this point where an explanation of the article’s title is in order. Chief, at one time, had a brilliant, albeit brief, career as a racer. For you see, Chief was a member of the American Racing Pigeon Union, and in 2008 he began his career with Mr. Coniac of Chicago, IL. In late summer of 2009, Chief began a race 50 miles west of Des Moines. He was expected to complete the 350 mile race in a little over 5½ hours. About halfway through the race, he encountered a career-ending event – an owl! We recovered Chief, or at least his femur with green identification band still attached, in mid-September of 2009. It was found in an owl pellet harvested in the pine grove near the southern border of the Wapsi River Center.

Chief, as you might have deduced, was a distant relative of the passenger pigeon spoken of earlier in this article. Homing or carrier pigeons have a rich and noteworthy military history, but that will have to wait for another time and naturalist. While reading this article, you might have thought that the plight of Chief and his forefathers was the *Goodbye*, but not so. After 18 years working at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, it is my turn to say goodbye. A special farewell is extended here to all those conservation-minded friends and colleagues I’ve worked with over the years. May our paths continue to cross; albeit in different migration patterns.

Wildlife Profile ~ Dark Eyed Junco

by Aaron Askelson, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist

Soon enough, the snow will be falling and we will be wishing for a few of those ninety degree days of last summer. What will the weather of this coming winter bring us? We don't know. But one thing you can be sure of, there will be dark eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) here to greet it. In fact, in the early part of November we have started to see a couple of them out here at the Wapsi River E. E. Center.

When the temperature drops and the winter birds start showing up, I can't help but think about the winter bird count I did when I was interning with Clinton County. The count is a way for volunteers to participate in some birding and collect data on the number and types of birds that can be found in a fifteen mile radius of a specific area. The day started really early



because we wanted to do some owl-ing, too. It was one of those beautiful December mornings with 8-inch drifts, bitter cold, and lots of blowing snow. Unfortunately, it also started with a deer collision just outside of Bennett in Cedar County. I had seen two deer in the ditch and had begun to slow down. The first one crossed in front of my truck without incident, but the second felt the need to run into the side of my truck. Bringing the

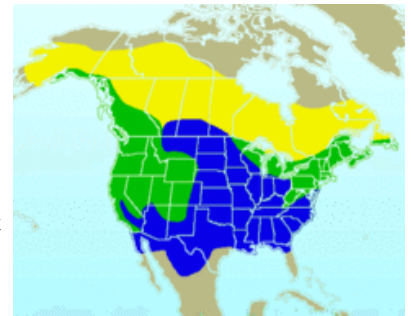
vehicle to a stop, I got out and assessed the damage as the deer ran off. My truck appeared okay, but of course it was covered in three inches of wet snow and hard to tell for sure. Not the best way to start the day.

I finally met up with Chuck Jacobsen, Clinton County naturalist, and we were on our way. Our area focused around Lost Nation. We traveled around; stopping at various sites that might have birds – dense shrubbery, fencerows, etc.). They were also seen on the gravel roads looking for spots not covered in snow, so they could collect grit needed to aid in their digestion. We would wait awhile, listening and looking for as many birds as we could identify. With a clipboard and a long list of birds, we checked off species we had seen and counted their numbers. This also included farm houses with birdfeeders. At every single birdfeeder we stopped at, there were tons of dark eyed juncos feeding off the ground on the seeds that had been spilt by the other birds. These fun little birds are amusing to watch as they swarmed around the various birdfeeders. The flocks moved from feeder to ground to cover and back again; hopping around as they collected their meal and seeming to be in constant motion. Their primary food

source during the winter months is seed, but during their mating season they do eat a fair amount of insects and other invertebrates. They were by far the most numerous birds we saw that day. In fact, their populations are believed to be secure, and the last estimate of their total population was 630 million individuals. That's a lot of birds!

They spend their summers in Canada and the western mountains of the United States, but they take over the rest of North America in the dead of winter.

Their breeding habitat is coniferous or mixed forest areas throughout the Arctic and Rocky Mountains. They live in communal flocks that help them stay warm and with so many eyes looking for food and predators it keeps more of them alive. These flocks have a social hierarchy with the older males dominating the females and younger birds.



They are primarily ground nesters or make their nests on the lowest branches of a small tree or shrub. Their nests are typically cup-shaped depressions in the ground near dense vegetation for cover. They have also been known to nest in the roots of an upturned tree. When nesting in urban areas, they will sometimes use buildings. They rarely nest at heights of over forty feet. The typical clutch size is four eggs for a healthy breeding pair. If two clutches are raised, the early spring clutch tends to be larger. Nest predation is common, with rodents being the usual culprits. The young become skilled at running before they can fly helping them to avoid predators. If the birds make it to maturity (one year of age), their other predators are sharp-shinned hawks, owls and weasels. They typically only live to be about three years old, but the oldest bird recorded was 11 years 4 months.

Most juncos are between 18-30 grams (ex. 3-5 quarters) with a wingspan of 18-25 cm (7¼-10 inches). Most of the birds in our region are gray or dark brown with a lighter or almost white belly. The outer tail feathers are white. Females tend to be smaller, paler and browner. There are many different types of juncos. With 15 different subspecies, there is a fair amount of variety and all birds interbreed where their populations intersect.

So, this winter throw some cracked corn, millet or other small seed out for these little guys and watch with amusement as they hop around and swarm your feeders. Listen for their call which is described as a twittering or trilling song. Oh, and by the way, that deer did damage my truck. It put a nice dent in front of the rear wheel and bent my running board, but it was worth the excitement of seeing the dark eyed junco.

Plant Profile ~ Dogbane

by Michael J. Granger, Naturalist

Let me introduce to you a plant that occurs regularly throughout the county, dogbane, also referred to as indian hemp – *Apocynum cannabinum* L. This native plant is found throughout the lower three-quarters of North America. It will grow in a variety of moist areas in full sun. Soils may be dry to medium wet, but well drained. On my outings, I have seen it fairly frequently along road ditches and roadways in Scott County. The plant can be found in fields, wastelands, thickets, along roadways and in open areas. The plant is easily recognizable in late fall when its leaves turn a golden yellow. Often, several plants will inhabit an area due to the fact that the roots spread outward producing new plants. Groupings of dogbane plants could be described as colonies.



Upon seeing the plant, one may conclude that it is a variety of milkweed for the plant's stems and leaves contain a milky fluid which oozes when broken. Leaves resemble the common milkweed, but are much smaller. The plant's stem divides into many branches, making it easy to distinguish from common milkweed. The leaves are ovate, lance-shaped, smooth edged, and glabrous (without hairs or projections) on the upper surface, but pubescent (containing white hairs) below.

The leaves appear oppositely along the stem and appear to be held upright. Larger leaves are found around the bottom of the plant measuring 6 inches long and decrease in size going upward along the stem. Stems are reddish in color and fleshy, but woody around the base. The plant grows from 3-5 foot tall.

New plants begin growing in late spring to early summer. Plants may begin from seed or re-grow from previous colonies. This perennial will flower during warm summer months. The flowers are small, greenish-white and measure about ¼ inch wide. The flowers occur in dense terminal



clusters. Flies, bees, butterflies, moths and many other small insects pollinate the flowers. After pollination, long slender pods develop in pairs. Each pod measures about 4-6 inches long. When dried the pods break open to reveal downy fluffy seeds much like dandelions.

Dogbane is known for its toxicity. Cattle avoid eating it. Dogs may, too. Considering the genus, *Apocynum*, literally translates into "away dog!" The species, *cannabinum*, translates into "like hemp"; which, is in reference to its strong fibers.

Dogbane is very well known for its hemp like fibers. Several Native American tribes utilized the fibers for a variety of things. The fibers have been found in some archeological sites thousands of years old. Cordage can be made from the fibers using a rolling technique with just the hands and thighs. Two bundles of fibers were rolled one direction and then twisted together in the opposite direction. Addition fiber bundles were spliced together to increase the length of the cord. On average, one plant produces about 2½ feet of fiber! A strong rope could be made to which would have a breaking point of several hundred pounds. Cordage could be stored in a dry place for several years.



Fishing nets and lines were made from cordage for it does not shrink or lose its strength. Snares, hide stretchers, bowstrings, moccasins, clothing and cattail mats were also created using dogbane cordage. Stems were harvested in late fall, after the plant's sap moved from the plant to the underground root systems. Plants will be fairly branchy in dry open areas, but will have longer straighter stems along stream banks or creeks. Stalks were collected by clipping close to the ground. The stalks can also be collected in the winter when the stalks were dry and brittle. The harvested plants were bundled by the lower ends for carrying.

With many important uses the Dogbane serves as a useful plant of the field. As stated before, the plant can be found frequently throughout Scott County. I think it's exciting to see large colonies of this amazing plant now, and know that it was used by native groups throughout North America many years ago.

November

25th ~ Christmas at the Village ~ P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Begin

your holidays early with a historic walk through the beautifully decorated village; complete with Friends of the Village in period

costume. While there, enjoy craft demonstrations and sales, letters to Santa in the telegraph office, refreshments at the soda fountain, holiday music, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Admission is free! Please bring non-perishables items to help supply the North Scott Food Pantry.



1:00 - 5:00

Winter

time to learn about our scaly friends! Join Caitlin Roeder at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center for a program on these resourceful reptiles and meet some of the snakes we have around Iowa.

20th ~ Friends of the Wapsi River Center, Inc.

Meeting ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Gander Mountain ~ Join us at the Gander Mountain store in Davenport to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center.

December

6th ~ Winter Bird Feeding ~ 4:30 P.M. ~ Scott County Library System (Eldridge Branch) ~ Come join us for a lesson on how to feed the birds this winter. Our feathered friends need a little help with the cold temperatures and wintry conditions. Learn how to help our feathered friends with a make-n-take feeder. Family fun for everyone! Contact librarian Christine Garrow at (563) 285-4794 to register.

8th ~ Natural Wreaths ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn how to use natural items to

make beautiful seasonal wreaths. Grapevines, pinecones, evergreen cuttings, seeds, nuts and berries can add a touch of the outdoors to anyone's decorating needs this season. Please call to register, as space is limited to 12 participants ~ (563) 328-3286.



11th ~ Logging Days ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Clinton County Naturalist Jill Schmidt, as you unfold the logging days of the upper Midwest. Jill will share her experiences living and learning about the historical logging industry in the northern woods of Wisconsin. Discover an original logging camp and enter the life of a lumberjack in the 1800s.

15th ~ Ssssnake Ssssymposium ~ 11:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Now that they have gone into hibernation for the winter, what better



January

11th - 13th ~ Quad Cities

Bald Eagle Days ~ This huge, annual event showcasing our national symbol – the American bald eagle, also various wildlife artist, informational booths and live animal presentations. The event is held at the QCCA Expo Center at 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, from 4:00 - 8:00 P.M. on Friday, January 11, 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M. on Saturday, January 12 and 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. on Sunday, January 13. Come see us at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center's booth. See ad for volunteer opportunity.



12th ~ Hunter Education Class ~ 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

~ Scott County Park (Old Nature Center) ~ Scott County Park Rangers will be teaching a Hunter Education Online Field Day at the old nature center. Participants must be 16 years old or older and have completed the online hunter safety training at www.HunterExam.com or www.hunter-ed.com/Iowa; participants must bring voucher to class. This is a review class with no firing. Participants will need to bring a sack lunch and beverage. Please call (563) 328-3282 to register.



26th ~ Cross-country Ski Exploration ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Director Dave Murcia in this low-impact, healthy, outdoor recreation and enjoy the winter scenes nature provides. You may bring your own equipment or a limited numbers of skis are available, so

Events

please call to reserve equipment at (563) 328-3286. Please remember this is a weather dependant event, and BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.

26th ~ Snowshoe Tracking ~ 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center
~ Come explore the wintery wilderness at the Wapsi River Center via snowshoes. Learn about the history of snowshoes and then search for animal tracks and signs of activity. Winter fun for everyone! Please call to reserve equipment; (563) 328-3286. BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.



February

2nd ~ Bettendorf Science Expo ~ 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. ~ Bettendorf Middle School ~ Join Director Dave Murcia as he presents 'Birds of Prey' including live raptors in support of this district-wide science expo. Come explore the variety of science-based concepts that have many hands-on activities by local professionals, educators and partners in education.

9th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 9:30 A.M. - 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come to the Wapsi River Center for a fun-filled day of winter activities. This is an event the whole family can enjoy, so plan to come out and discover winter at its best. A limited number of skis and snowshoes are available, so please call to reserve equipment; (563) 328-3286. BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.



- **9:30 A.M. ~ Cross-country Ski Clinic** ~ Come learn the basics of cross-country skiing and tour the Wapsi Center trails; if conditions allow. Participants will learn about proper skiing techniques, safety and equipment. Participants may bring their own equipment.

- **12:30 P.M. ~ Snowshoe Nature Hike** ~ Join Michael Granger on this excursion into the Wapsi River Center's woodlands. We will be traveling the way of the Native Americans and early pioneers, looking for signs of life in the still, winter woods.

- **2:00 P.M. ~ Winter Bird Feeding** ~ Come learn how to identify winter birds; plus how to attract and feed our feathered friends. Fun for all ages!



- **3:00 P.M. ~ Fabulous Furs** ~ Come join a Wapsi naturalist to learn about furbearers that live in our area. Learn how they adapt and thrive during the cold winter months. Explore the history of fur trapping, trading and how the animals were used.

- **4:30 P.M. ~ 7th Annual Chili Cook-off** ~ The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. will be hosting this annual competition. Please bring your best chili creation to share, and possibly win the coveted chili cup!!! Donations are accepted, and please bring your own table setting.



- **5:30 P.M. ~ Frostbite Star Party** ~ The winter it is a great time for astronomy! The sky is never clearer than on cold, winter nights. The winter constellations center on Orion, the Great Hunter. In the sword hanging from Orion's Belt, one can find the Orion Nebula, which is one of the most spectacular objects to be seen through a telescope. The St. Ambrose University's Menke Astronomical Observatory is the location; park in lot A.

16th ~ Forcing a Little Spring into Winter ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Horticultural Society members Carolee Stanley and Juanita Spears for an extensive how-to program. Be sure to check out the article on this topic within this issue of *The W.R.E.N.*



21st ~ Friends of the Wapsi River Center, Inc. Meeting ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Gander Mountain ~ Join us at the Gander Mountain store in Davenport to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center.

Forcing a Little Spring into Winter

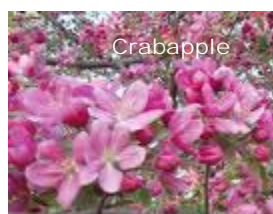
by Lisa Gerwulf, Assistant Naturalist



Using plants to force a little spring into winter has been a practice of horticulturists the world over. If you think about it, the Rose Bowl Parade would have no theme if flowers could only bloom in the spring.

Forcing bulbs has appealed to both expert and novice gardeners because of its simplicity, quickness and certainty of results. Flowering shrubs and trees can be forced as well.

Start by selecting branches loaded with flower buds. A simple way to tell the difference between a leaf bud and flower bud is to look at the shape. The flower bud will be more plump and rounded than a leaf bud. Selecting branches that have curves or bends will create an interesting blooming arrangement.



Submerge the branches overnight in a deep pail or tub of water, or wrap them in a damp cloth and put them in a plastic bag for a few days. This will loosen the bud scales and allow them to fall off as the flowers expand.



Once thoroughly moistened, stand the branches in a pail of water in a place where you can control the temperature. To ensure lustrous color, adequate size and longevity, 60-70⁰ F is best for the developing flowers. Direct sunlight is not advised. Placing the container in a cooler location at night will also help them last.

This year, why not try a new hobby and force a little spring into winter? Just imagine, fresh flowers adorning every facet of your indoor living space while Jack Frost decorates the windowpanes.



Below is a list of shrub and tree species recommended (by the state of Illinois Cooperative Extension) for forcing. Also, join Horticultural Society members Carolee Stanley and Juanita Spears



on February 16 at 1:00 P.M. for an extended how-to program on [Forcing a Little Spring into Winter](#) here at the Wapsi River Center.

Shrub or Tree	Time to Force	Comments
Forsythia	1 week	Many yellow flowers
Honeysuckle	3 weeks	Fragrant pink or white flowers
Wisteria	3 weeks	Blue-violet or white flower clusters
Bridal Wreath	4 weeks	Small white flowers in "sprays", double flowers last longer
Lilac	4 weeks	Fragrant lilac, blue, purple or white flowers
Redbud	2 weeks	Dark branches, small magenta-pink flowers
Magnolia	3 weeks	Large cream-white to deep red flowers, easy to force
Crabapple	4 weeks	White, pink or red flowers in clusters, singles easier to force
Buckeye	5 weeks	White pyramidal flower clusters
Flowering Dogwood	5 weeks	Large white flowers, long-lasting



Kids' Column ~ Recycled Snowflakes



Materials

Paper towel or toilet paper tubes
 Pencil
 Ruler
 Scissors
 12" square of waxed paper
 Permanent marker
 Tacky glue
 Thread

How To

1. Begin by pressing tube(s) flat and setting the folds with your thumbs.
2. Cut tube(s) into ½" loops.
3. Determine which type of snowflake you want to create (see diagrams below).
4. Mark either a "+" or "Y" with permanent marker in the center of the square of waxed

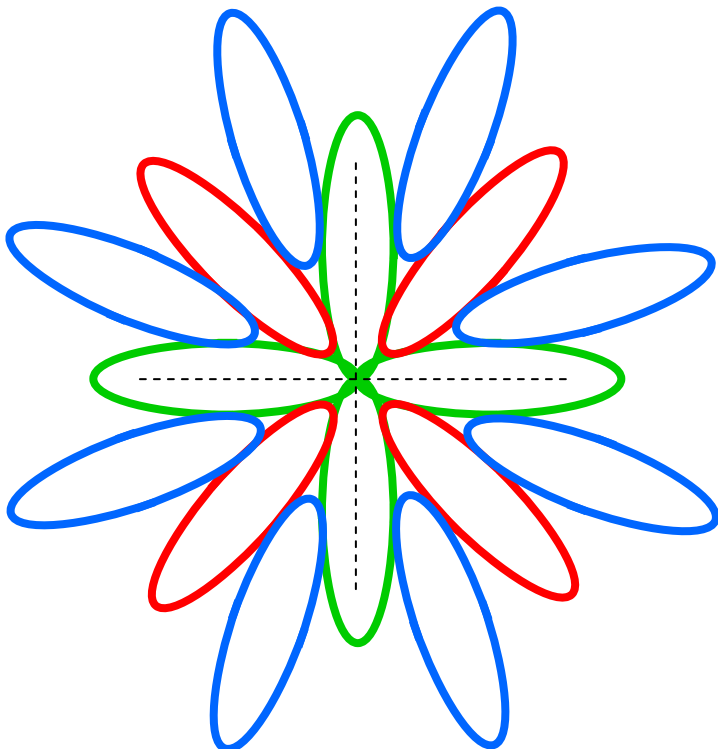
paper. To find the center, fold the waxed paper square in half one direction than the other.

5. Begin laying out the loops according to the following color sequence: green, red, & blue. *Optional additional sequence for Snowflake-divisible-by-3, continue with pink or both pink and orange (diagram shows only one section).*
6. Glue loops together where they touch.
7. Once dried, peel from waxed paper and string a piece of thread through the loop you want to hang the snowflake from.

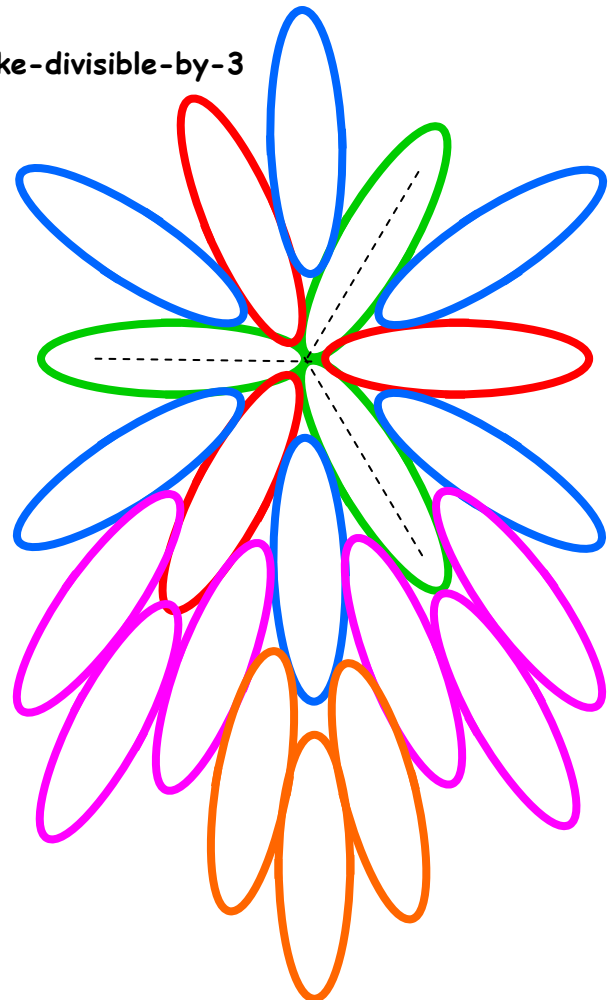
Embellishment

Only the loop edges are visible, so painting the surfaces might not give the results you want. An alternative would be to add glue to the loop edges and liberally sprinkle with crystal glitter.

Snowflake-divisible-by-2



Snowflake-divisible-by-3



Winter Sports Opportunities

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center

The Center's 1/5 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails provide the perfect opportunity for wildlife viewing. Cross-country ski and snowshoe equipment is available during Center hours on Saturdays from 12:30 - 4:30 P.M., free of charge.

Scott County Park

The park's 4 miles of cross-country trails provide a journey rich in scenery. The trails are not groomed; however, they will be cleared of debris.

West Lake Park

Trails are open to cross-country skiing; however, they are not groomed. The park's four lakes are the perfect location for the ice-fishing enthusiast. Be sure to check ice conditions before venturing out!

Volunteers Needed at Bald Eagle Days!!

The Quad City Bald Eagle Days at the Q.C.C.A. Expo Center is quickly approaching, and we need volunteers to help run the Wapsi River Center booth. Below is a list of times, how many individuals are needed and what day your assistance is needed. Call (563) 328-3286 to volunteer.

Friday, January 11		Saturday, January 12		Sunday, January 13	
4:00 - 6:00 P.M.	2 people	9:30 - 11:30 A.M.	1 person	9:30 - 11:30 A.M.	1 person
6:00 - 8:00 P.M.	2 people	11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.	2 people	11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.	2 people
		1:30 - 3:30 P.M.	2 people	1:30 - 3:30 P.M.	2 people
		3:30 - 5:30 P.M.	2 people	3:30 - 5:30 P.M.	2 people
		5:30 - 8:00 P.M.	1 person		

In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center

Cheryl Jackson

Craig Jackson

Mary Johnson

Jim Schuster

Jim Ross

Julie Ross

Carol Rogers

Jerry Wala

Erma Wiszmann

Ingrid Bogdanowicz

Lucia Dryanski

Bill Robbins

K.J. Rebarcak

Connie Huber

Dave Huber

Beth Gage

Clare Gulf

Jacob Walsh &

Venturing Crew 325

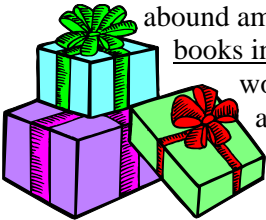
Ridgewood 3rd & 4th

Grades

Visit the Friends' Gift Shop for all your Holiday Gift-Giving Needs!

The Wapsi River Center's gift shop has unique and practical gifts for the nature lovers on your list! How about a sunflower seed birdfeeder in two convenient sizes? The small Rubbermaid™ feeder is perfect for decks, patios, apartments or nursing home patrons. The hopper-like, locally-made mailbox feeders can hold a large amount of seed for more convenient feeding. Stocking stuffers abound including: arrowheads, assorted squishy/stretchy/flying plastic creatures, nature tattoos, pocket compasses, fools' gold, geodes and bookmarks featuring Carl Freeman's artwork. Wildflower presses and packaged blank cards in various themes can be found. A variety of notebooks and bookmarks offer *Green Gift* options. For the avid anglers in the family, there are a variety of fish-themed welcome signs. An assortment of field guides varying in type and title

abound amongst the shelves. Finder guides include: berry, winter weed and wildflower. Sticker books include: insects, leaves and birds of prey. Pocket guides include: raptors, butterflies and woodlands. Naturalist guides include: trees, birds of prey, butterflies & moths, pond life and animal tracks. The Iowa County Conservation Board's *Outdoor Adventure Guide* as well as *Iowa's Wildlife Viewing Guide* are also available. Come check it out and bring your wish list! All proceeds will benefit the Wapsi River Center.



*The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.
Seeks New Members*

The purpose of the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc., is to support the ongoing activities of the Wapsi River Center. We do this by volunteering to help with school groups, interpretive activities throughout the year, donating maintenance skills and in hosting the Eagle View Eco Center. We operate a gift shop housed at the Eco Center which offers a wide variety of items ranging from books and other educational materials to home decorating items.

As a tax-exempt organization, we can raise funds which the Wapsi River Center uses for special projects and environmental education material purchases. The Friends Group also pitches in to help with special events like the Volunteer Workdays, Ecology Day, Bald Eagle Days and various workshops.

The Friends are an enthusiastic group of citizens just like you. Will you join us? You are invited to attend our monthly meeting on the third Thursday at 7:00 P.M. The Eagle View Eco Center is the site for meetings during the months of March thru October, and Gander Mountain is the site for meetings November thru February. Drop-ins are welcome! Call the Wapsi Center for more information, (563) 328-3286. Join by sending the form below to: Carol Rogers, Treasurer ~ 1103 East Garfield ~ Davenport, IA 52803.



YES! I want to join the Friends' Group. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone Number _____
 Email Address _____

_____ \$ 5.00 newsletter
 _____ \$15.00 contributing member
 _____ \$25.00 supporting member

WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER
31555 52ND AVENUE
DIXON, IA 52745
Tel: (563) 328-3286
Fax: (563) 843-2845

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For All Seasons

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ **Eagle View Eco Center Hours ~ Saturdays ~ 12:30 - 4:30 P.M.** ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The W.R.E.N. (Wapsi River Environmental News) is published quarterly by the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and the Scott County Conservation Board.

Scott County Conservation Board

Members:

John "Skip" O'Donnell
Carol Fennelly
Beth McAleer
Rich Mohr
Gene Weis

Director:

Roger Kean



Phone Numbers

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center
(563) 328-3286

Scott County Conservation Board
(563) 328-3280

Clinton County Conservation Board
(563) 847-7202

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Mike Granger, Naturalist
Aaron Askelson, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist
Caitlin Roeder, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist
Leroy Haeffner, Caretaker

Clinton County:

Mark Roberts, E. E. Coordinator
Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretative Naturalist
Jessica Steines, Interpretative Naturalist
Jill Schmidt, Interpretative Naturalist

Mailing List

If you would like to receive "The W.R.E.N." and do not have internet access, please send a post card to the Wapsi River E. E. Center at the address above.

The Scott County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes they have been subject to discrimination, they may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Scott County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240.